

CHAS-323

Mid 19th C.

Johnson-Brown House  
Bel Alton Vicinity  
Private

This abandoned, two story frame house was once the attractive home of a family of free Negroes in antebellum Charles County. It is one of the few remaining in the area of southern Maryland.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

CH - 323  
MAEI # 0903235304

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC **The Johnson-Brown House**

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER **1 mile north of Fairgrounds, on east side of Fairgrounds Rd.**

CITY, TOWN **Bel Alton**  VICINITY OF **La Plata** CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT **1**

STATE **Md.** COUNTY **Charles**

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER <b>Abandoned</b>

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME **Mrs. Katie E. Thomas** Telephone #: **202-EX-6- 5815**

STREET & NUMBER **420 20th St. N.E.**

CITY, TOWN **Washington** VICINITY OF STATE, zip code **D.C. 20002**

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. **Charles County Courthouse**

Liber #: **No deed registered**  
Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN **La Plata** STATE **Md.**

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE **None**

DATE  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN STATE

CH-323

**7 DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

This two story frame house is now abandoned and in derelict condition, and does not reflect its attractive appearance during the days of its occupancy, according to Mrs. Katie Thomas, whose ancestors built and owned this house. The house faces the old county road, and the yard was boxed off in a picket fence, and bordered with flower gardens. Today that road is no longer used, and the new county road cuts behind the house. None of the farm buildings related to this site remain, but they once stood in the area of the present-day county road. Those outbuildings included an eight room tobacco barn, which also included a one room stable for the farm horse, and a room for storage of corn. There was no meat house, according to Charles Lancaster ( the elderly neighbor who lived in this house after the Johnson-Brown descendants had moved out). The meat was stored instead in salt barrels in the kitchen, he said.

The facade of the house faces east, and the roof line runs north-south. The facade has three bays, a door centrally placed and two windows flanking it, with double hung sashes pinned by wooden dowels, and containing 6 x 6 lights. The block is one bay in depth, and from the center of the back length extended a one bay kitchen, which has since been pulled down. A brick chimney of common bond ascended the north gable end. The framing members are up and down saw cut, except for the sills which were hewn. The frame was sheathed by weatherboards attached by cut nails.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

Black History

SPECIFIC DATES possibly mid 19th c. BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

According to the present owner, Mrs. DKatie Thomas, this house was built by her ancestors, the Johnson family, who were free Negroes in antebellum Charles County. She said that the house was c. 150 years old. If records can be found to confirm this, this dwelling would be one of the few homes of free Negroes still standing in southern Maryland, and one of the finest.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

George W. McDaniel, Historic Sites Survey

ORGANIZATION

Md. Commission on Afro-American History and Culture

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

20 Dean St.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

STATE

Md.

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
 The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
 (301) 267-1438

CONTINUATION OF THE PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE  
JOHNSON-BROWN HOUSE:

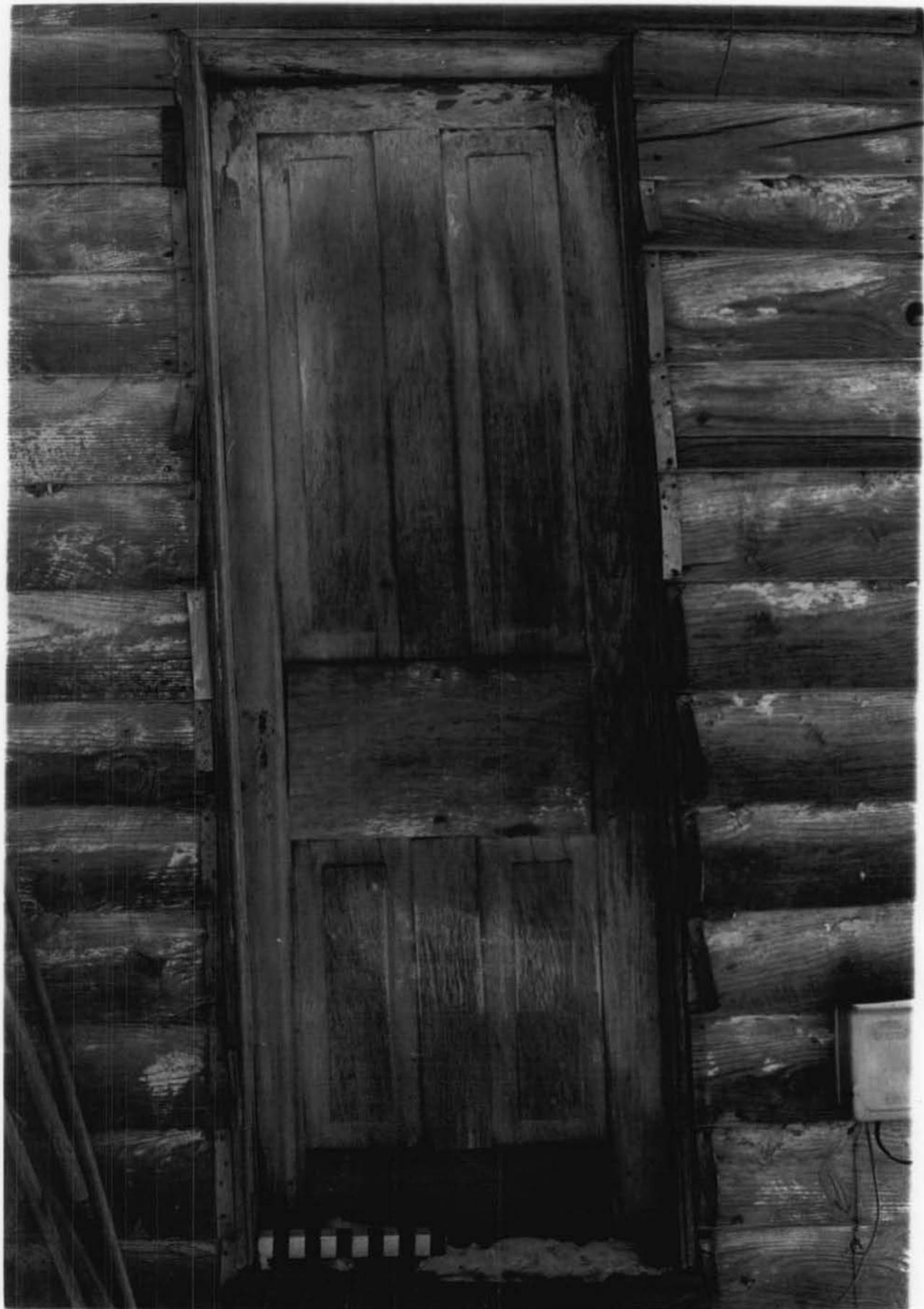
In plan, there were two rooms in the downstairs principal block and two upstairs. Along the western wall to the south of the entrance ascended a narrow staircase enclosed by planks, a surprisingly plain feature for this house. Since the house was locked, an investigation of the interior for decorative details was not possible.



BEL AIR  
NORTHWEST ELEVATION  
CH 323 GWM  
2/76



Southwest Elevation  
CH 323 2/76 GWM



Arnie Johnson House  
(Johnson-Brown)

Bel Air, Md.

Door into west  
gable end

CH 323 2/76 GWM